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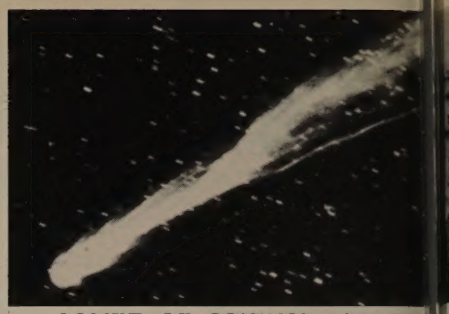
2 *PERFECT SERVICE: To love our neighbor as perfectly as possible means to serve our neighbor perfectly.*



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PERFECT SERVICE

our task is to love

Recently we were struck by the concise affirmation of Paul, "The whole of the Law is summarized in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself"(Gal. 5:14) and we agreed that loving our neighbor sums up everything for us. Yes, everything. But why? Why is it, that when we love our neighbor, we feel completely fulfilled?

It's because, in loving our neighbor we find God; following the way that leads through our neighbor, we reach the Lord. And God is our Ideal. For over forty years now, we have experienced that going to God through our neighbor is at times like going through a dark tunnel filled with pain, doubts, and anguish. It's rather like going through purgatory, and then emerging to a clearer vision of heaven, a deeper experience of the divine. Love for our neighbor leads inevitably to love for God.

This is what the charism of the Focolare has always pointed out to us. This is what the Church—whose decisions reflect God's will—confirmed, when, after studying at length the goals for which God had brought the Focolare into being, she declared that God is calling us to be"perfect in love."[1]

Therefore, we too are called to be perfect; and perfect means saints, but saints in loving. Some are called by God to become saints, to reach union with him, through prayer and contemplation; others through the practice of individual virtues; still others through preaching, and so on. These are all things which we must certainly not overlook. But our way, *the way* for us, continues to be love for our neighbor.

Yes, we must reach sanctity. We must make our lives a Holy Journey, but a journey of love. Besides, the only way to work so "that all may be one," is to unleash a revolution of love! Isn't love the only thing capable of uniting people, of making them live as the Mystical Body? Without love, how could we have the Risen Lord among us? And without him, our spiritual and apostolic life would have no foundation. Certainly, we cannot think of the Focolare, without thinking of love , because our new life blossomed from our discovery of God as Love.

Our task, then, is to love. That is how we must seek our perfection. Moreover, we must always improve our love for each neighbor we encounter during the day: by taking particular care of the meal we have to prepare, or the lesson for the class we are going to teach, or the talk we have to write, or the affairs that we have to take care of, and so on. And if it seems to us that what we are doing is only to our own advantage—for example, going to school, in the case of the gen—let's keep in mind that we want to learn those subjects , or that art or profession, so we can be more useful in the future, to Jesus who is present in society.

We must do everything as well as possible, and should therefore listen carefully to the inner voice, whenever it offers us some suggestion or correction. Listen carefully, and do our best. When the saints reached the highest level of sanctity, which is called the transforming union, they had become completely one with Jesus, and thus possessed various gifts. One of these was the ability to perform perfect works.

From now on, let's make every effort to love as perfectly as possible, which means serving our neighbor perfectly. Let's try to make our life a continous act of *perfect service.*

Chiara Lubich

1) The general aim of the Focolare is that its members become "perfect in love." The reference here is to the Rule of the Focolare, approved by the Catholic Church in 1962.

From the book **Journey** *by Chiara Lubich, published by New City Press.*

Comet of science comet of mystery

By GIULIO MEAZZINI

For thousands of years Halley's comet has accompanied our history.

Every 77 years Halley's comet reappears in our skies. Lying on my back I survey the starry sky. An immense sea of stars, silent and throbbing, seems to gradually envelope me as I search for the comet. I'm not able to locate it. Perhaps this is because I'm not a skilled observer, or perhaps because the comet itself is difficult to locate among the stars. Certainly viewing conditions this time as the comet passes close to Earth are among the least favorable due to the relative positions of the comet, the Earth and the Sun.

An involuntary chill goes down my spine, from a sense of awe at the majesty of the heavens. If I, a man of the twentieth century, immersed in a climate of de-mystification and rational thought, cannot help but be engrossed by the awesome sight above me, I cannot imagine what must have gone through the mind of medieval man whose life was based on superstition and ignorance as he was visited by this inexplicable, shining fireball in the sky.

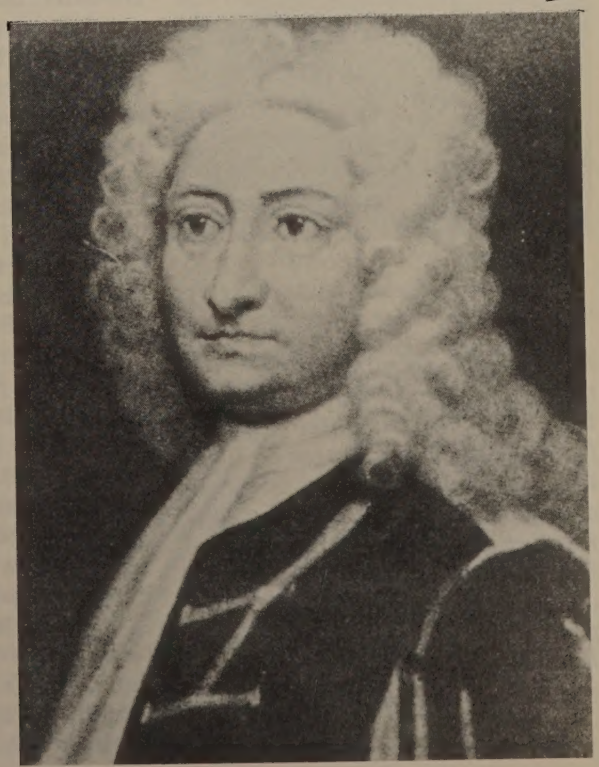
For thousands of years Halley's comet has been orbiting the Sun, approaching the Earth once every 76 or 77 years. During its visits it has been a silent witness to some of the most important events in human history.

In your immagination, picture a night in northern Gaul, (modern day France) in the year 451 A.D. A vast plain is covered by ravaged bodies, some lying on top of one another, in a chaotic picture that bears silent witness to a ferocious battle the day before. Two armies are completely annihilated. The army of Attila the Hun had seemed unstoppable; but now at Camp Catalaunici the bodies of both his army and those of the Romans and the barbarians who fought with them bear proof that the advance was halted. During the night a brilliant comet shines over the sea of fallen soldiers. By its light during the following days, the remaining barbaric tribes make their way home. Once again, according to the popular belief of those days, the appearance of the comet had brought with it war, death and famine.

Not only the common people judged comets to be harbingers of disaster. Since Roman times comets have been observed, studied and feared by astrologers and the educated. Pliny described comets in this way, "... a kind of star that brings with it an almost uncontrollable terror."

Comets were seen as fires in the sky that ignited themselves and were put out with no predictable pattern, except that they were associated with disasters and calamities. No one considered them as heavenly bodies moving freely along their path through the sky and returning to view on a regular basis.

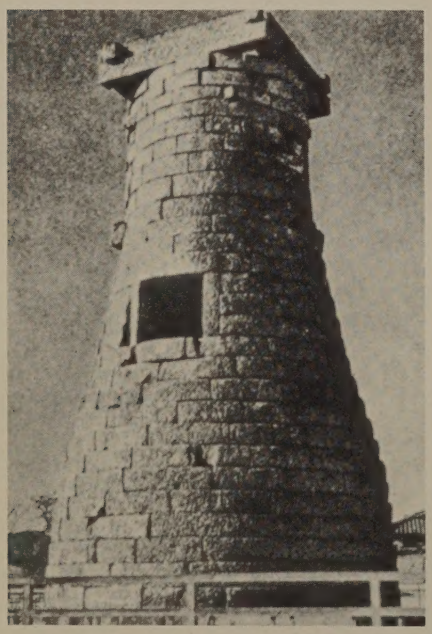
Aristotle's view of the universe, accepted for more than 1500 years, taught that only five objects move around the Earth besides the Sun and the Moon—the five planets. Everything else in the heavens, including the stars, were considered fixed and unchanging.



Opposite page: An image of Halley's comet as captured on the computer at the Naval Observatory in Washington. Different levels of luminosity can be distinguished.
Right: An early eighteenth century portrait of Edmond Halley.

The comets, according to this theory, were simple meteorological phenomena and, as such, could influence the life of mankind.

The only dissenting voice from antiquity was that of Seneca. His views caused Nero to order him to commit suicide. Seneca saw comets, not as fires that appeared in an unforeseeable way, but as eternal works of nature. His words sound prophetic: "Can anyone believe that in this immense and splendid universe, among the innumerable stars that decorate each area of the sky without leaving even the smallest area void of beauty, there are only five stars which are free to move, with all the others fixed in one spot like an immovable mass? ...The person who thinks this way is ignoring the power of nature."



A Korean astronomical observatory dating from the 17th century. From the Far East, particularly from the ancient Chinese civilization, we have the first accurate observations on Halley's passage through our skies. Astronomers of that culture were considered as the only interpreters of heavenly phenomena and their effects on human destiny. These men held important political positions.

Seneca proposed seriously studying natural phenomena. Concerning his contemporaries attitude toward nature, Seneca concludes bitterly, "If we apply ourselves with all our strength to these studies (of nature), if our young people who are gaining mature judgement dedicate themselves to these studies led by older people who show them the way, only then will we reach in some measure the depth in which truth abides, that truth which today we are seeking only superficially, in a half-hearted way."

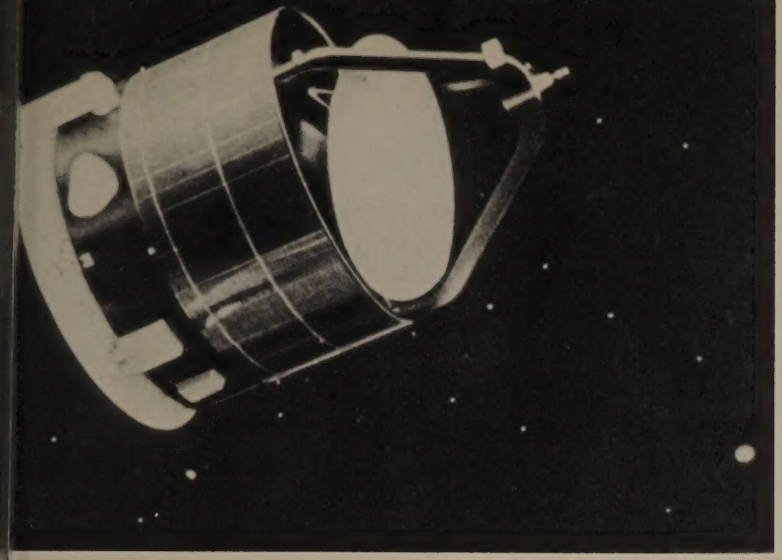
Only in the 14th century was the reputation of comets lifted. The Italian painter Giotto, when depicting the adoration of the Magi in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, chose as the star of Bethlehem, that symbol of joy and hope, the comet as he saw it during its passage in 1301. Since that time almost every creche has been illuminated with its own "star with a tail."

Four centuries later, the comet passed through the night sky of the man who would give to it his name. In 1682 at the age of 26, Edmond Halley was already a famous astronomer, geographer, research scientist, mathematician, physicist and inventor. He was described as "a man who was open, creative, versatile, a productive scientist, a man involved with adventure, a generous man." It would be Halley, a few years later, who encouraged the reticent Newton to publish his revolutionary Theory of Universal Gravitation, which explains the influence of the Sun and the planets on the motion of bodies in the solar system. Halley even helped Newton find the financial backing so that his work could be published.

The passage of the comet in 1682 began years of study and observation by the young Halley. His conclusions earned him an immutable place in history. He became convinced that the comet is a heavenly body that was following an elliptical orbit as it traced its path around the sun.

The results of his work were published in 1705. "Many things convinced me that the 'Comet of 1531' observed by Apiano was the same one described by Kepler and Longomontani in 1607 and that I observed during its return in 1682. All the observations were in agreement. ...Thus I can predict with confidence its return in the year 1758. If this prediction is true, there will be no reason to doubt that it will return again in the future."

Halley died serenely in 1742 before being able to verify the comet's return. In 1759, very slightly later than Halley predicted, the comet returned. The sighting of the comet was one of the greatest events in the newly-developing field of astronomy and gave a decisive



The European space craft "Giotto" flew within 450 miles of Halley's comet in March. Fast-moving dust particles penetrated its thick shield damaging its camera but not before the first pictures of the comet's nucleus were relayed back to Earth.

The star over the stable in Giotto's nativity scene which hangs in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padova resembles Halley's Comet as Giotto himself viewed it in 1301.

impetus to the new intense study of the phenomena of nature. After 1500 years the thoughts and hopes of Seneca were finally being realized.

From those years until now our study and knowledge of the nature of Halley's comet has increased. Even so there continued to be signs of superstitious beliefs on the part of some over-zealous scientists. In 1910, when the Earth passed through the tail of the comet, some astronomers publicly feared the possibility of epidemics and mass poisonings. There was great fear that the end of the world was at hand.

This year's return of the comet was announced calmly by the scientific community. Five space probes have aroused the interest of all. The close encounters of the probes with the comet have added much precise detailed information on the nature and composition of the nucleus and tail of the comet. Comets are remnants of the early solar systems, preserved like fossils from the time of the formation of the solar system, about four billion years ago.

The European space probe "Giotto," named after the artist, intersected the orbit of the comet, passing closer to its head than all the others. At a distance of only 450 miles from the nucleus of Halley, "Giotto" relayed our first glimpse of the surface of the comet, revealing a potato-shaped object about 1.8 miles by 1.3 miles. The nucleus of ice with rocks and dust was televised as having hills, valleys and even a small mountain. Much useful data was gathered from the probe. Unfortunately at the moment of closest approach, the dust from the tail of the comet damaged the cameras of the probe. Fortunately, data continued to be transmitted even after the cameras failed.

The data from each probe has been shared with all other contries. The collaboration between the countries that launched probes has been very close: there were two probes from the U.S.S.R., two from Japan and one from Italy. The United States was able to turn the cameras from its Pioneer satellite in orbit around Venus, completely around in order to photograph Halley as it made its closest approach to the Sun. All the space agencies involved will meet next November in Padua, Italy at which time all the results will be discussed and shared.

It is night. Here I am again lying on my back looking at the sky searching for the elusive comet. Although I've missed my chance to see the comet on this visit, it doesn't matter. After disturbing the dreams and hopes of many of our ancestors, Halley's comet has become a symbol of peace because of the collaboration it has stimulated among countries. This view of the comet corresponds to the way Giotto intended it to be when he painted it full of splendor, high over the crib of Bethlehem to symbolize with its light the birth of the Redeemer. □

WORK AND MONASTICISM

By ANTONIO MARIA BAGGIO

At a time when manual labor was scorned monks raised this form of work to the level of prayer.

The Christian community of Carthage around the year 400 A.D. had big problems on its hands. The bishop, Aurelio, saw factions developing and feared that points of doctrine would also be drawn into the fray. To help settle the dispute he called in Augustine, the bishop of nearby Hippo.

Oddly enough it all started with a few monks who refused to work! Wasn't it true, they said, that Jesus gave as models to live by the birds of the air who neither toil nor spin? Wasn't it logical then that monks who had left everything and placed their trust in God—as do the birds—be supported by the good Christian faithful?

The Discipline of Work

Augustine's answer was not long in coming. It is a real treatise on monastic work. He explained why the monks' interpretation of Scripture was erroneous by examining in detail the context of these and other related Scriptural passages. Also the life of St. Paul was a clear rebuttal to their argument. Paul did not want to exercise his right as an apostle in order to receive financial support from the community although he could have. Instead he chose to work as a tentmaker while preaching the gospel so that he would not be a burden to anyone.

Augustine explained that exemption from work for preaching the gospel is a concession that is made and not a rule to go by.

The monks from Carthage—Augustine remarked—were looking only at the material aspect of work which they held in scorn. They were making the same mistake as those who go to the other extreme and overwork.

Both positions forget that the aim of work is a spiritual reward; it is fatigue accepted in view of eternal life. Certainly, it enables us to earn our bread, but its primary purpose is to help us enjoy eternal life.

For Augustine then, work is only a means leading to our spiritual good. Work becomes sacred because it acquires an ascetical value, but considered by itself it doesn't have a purpose beyond obtaining the necessities of life for us.

This really wasn't a new concept of work. The "Didache", an authoritative manual of early Christian belief, practice and government, also gave instructions on hospitality. It recommended that pilgrims be welcomed and helped, but only for a few days. They should then be put to work, or in some way be made useful. "However," the Didache records, "if he does not agree to do this, he is trading on the name of Christ; beware of such men."[1]

Jerome gave some enlightening advice to a monk, "Engage in some occupation, so that the devil may always find you

"The fact that the highest model of Christian perfection, the monk, dedicated his time to work, caused the social and spiritual prestige given him to fall also on his activity."

busy."[2] His point was that even more importantly than for obtaining food, manual work is necessary to a person's salvation. For those who were striving to reach perfection, Basil the Great advised that they "should work day and night 'that they may have something to share with those in need.'"[3]

The Work of Monks

In concluding that everyone in the monastery should work, Augustine had the weight of Church tradition on his side. Logically, the distribution of tasks would depend on the monk's previous work experience. For the most part monks were used to manual labor. Besides craftsmen, at times even slaves used to heavy labor joined the monastic life. Augustine realized, however, that not everyone was accustomed to doing heavy work. We shouldn't be amazed or scandalized then to learn that he excused those who, having been rich, were unfamiliar with strenuous labor, but obliged them to equally dedicate their time and effort in other kinds of employ. Health permitting, however, he advised these monks to choose tasks involving manual labor that they were able to do. By so doing "they perform works of mercy greater than when they gave their wealth to those in need.... This gesture would take away every excuse from the lazy and from those of a lowly background who have done fatiguing work but now seek an easier life."[4]

It is not hard to imagine the tension created in a monastery by those monks from wealthy families who had made donations to the monastery and who did not want to follow Augustine's exhortation to work. In these cases, the social class divisions that existed beyond the monastery walls were reproduced within.

We must, however, take into consideration the mentality of the times wherein manual labor was left to slaves and servants and the privileged classes sought a life of leisure so that they could dedicate themselves to political, intellectual and cultural pursuits.

It was very often these persons from the privileged class who, after their conversion to Christianity, furnished a large part of the Church's leadership. This took place for the simple reason that they possessed the educational background and minimum of culture needed. During the time of Augustine and for some time afterward, Christianity would have to struggle with the mentality of the times.

Ideally, work was to be carried out, therefore, with a deep spiritual motivation, giving primary value to the discipline, to the asceticism of work. This disposition was essential in maintaining equality among the members of a monastery, and in bearing witness to the fact that fraternal charity did overcome all social and economic barriers. Work carried on in this way provided a foretaste of what life would be like in the "heavenly city."

The model of Christian life offered by monasticism gradually won over the Church and won over society to the idea of work. In so doing monasticism prepared society—through the centuries—for its rebirth after the collapse of the Roman Empire. The historian, Jacques Le Goff tells us, "The simple fact that the highest model of Christian perfection, the monk, dedicated his time to work caused the social and spiritual prestige given him to fall also on his activity. The spectacle of the monk at labor impressed his contemporaries in its favor. The monk who humbled himself by working nobilized work."[5]

According to the rule of St. Benedict work is a duty equal to the reading of Script- ►

"Amid the general attitude of contempt and scorn toward the poor farmer ... Pope Gregory the Great ... invested all his energies in protecting the tillers of the soil."

tures: "Idleness is the enemy of the soul. The brethren,therefore, must be occupied at stated hours in manual labor, and again at other hours in reading books containing the word of God."[6] The two occupations were regulated in reference to each other, according to the needs of the season and of the particular duties required by the liturgical calendar. For example, during Lent the hours given for manual work and reading changed: "These are days in which everyone should receive a book from the library, to read through consecutively."[7] Beside the time allowed for prayer, a monk normally worked six to eight hours and read four hours a day each day.

Pagan Farmers

The life of Benedict as recounted by Gregory the Great, cites miracles which give us insight into particular working conditions of the time. Once Benedict miraculously recovered a monk's sickle that had fallen into a lake and another time he miraculously repaired the grain sifter which a wet-nurse had broken.[8] The Rule of Benedict requires that the tools and utensils of the monastery be entrusted to monks of high moral integrity and when, for example, the kitchen staff changes each week, there is a particular person who makes sure the utensils are clean and in perfect condition.[9]

Why was so much care taken of these utensils? The fact is that at the time of the high Middle Ages (roughly from 400 A.D. to the time of Charlemagne) skilled labor was hard to come by. Experienced carpenters and craftsmen able to make work tools were few, making equipment all the more precious. This scarcity of utensils lasted into the 900's when the Dukes of Normandy nationalized plough blades.

Generally it was the blacksmiths and goldsmiths of works of a religious nature, who maintained and handed down technical know-how.

It wasn't only craftsmen who seem to have disappeared from the scene, but mention of work in general is hard to find in texts of the early medieval period. The writers of the times seem to have ignored the existence of work. The absence of all mention of work coincides with the "disappearance" of the farmer with whom work was identified. There probably continued to exist some free farmers, but many sought safety and security on the feudal estates by becoming serfs, a status not much unlike the ancient slaves, bound to the soil and more or less subject to the will of their lord.

At this time, farmers came to be called pagans. The fact was that the countryside remained, in large part, outside the Christian penetration of the early centuries. The Middle Ages was to be the epoch of their evangelization.

In the literature of this period, farmers appear as the poor and come to be identified that way. Gregory of Tours, for example, writes about "a *poor man* with two oxen."

Amid the general attitude of contempt and scorn toward the "poor farmer" on the part of a society that conserved an aristocratic vision of work there stood out the works of Pope Gregory the Great, an aristocrat but a monk who invested all his energies in protecting the tillers of the soil and in opposing the exploitation committed even by ecclesiastical administrators. Gregory organized and reformed the patrimony of the Church, constantly seeking to strengthen the link between Scripture and the daily practice of the life of faith. In this way,evangelization and organization came together. As Gregory the Great phrased it: "In fact, doctrine does not penetrate the minds of the needy unless a compassionate hand commends it to the hearts

of the hearers....Let pastors, then, give their entire devotion to the spiritual interests of their subjects, without neglecting to provide for their exterior life."[10] Gregory attempted to link charity with the efficiency and well-being of all of society. In fact, he was convinced that the workers' well-being would lead to an increase in agricultural production and would stop the oppressed and overburdened farmers from abandoning the land.

New Social Classes

The era of the Carolingian dynasty (613 A.D. to the late 900's) witnessed a strong burst of productive activity mainly because new lands were being developed. Farming agreements were made which linked the ownership of land (or some improvement in the farmer's conditions) to the better cultivation of crops.

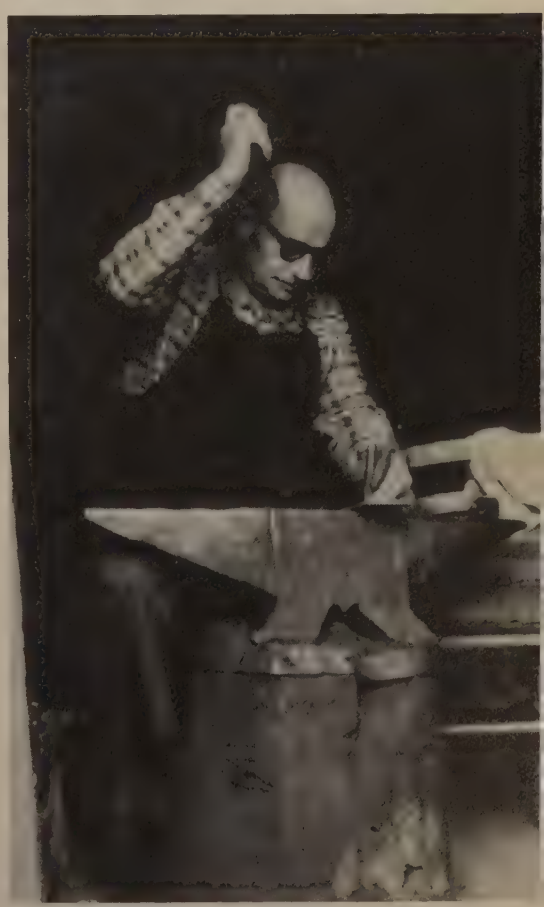
The "hero" of the times was the heavy plow, an imposing tool, which was practically the symbol of the new medieval world which no longer turned only to the Mediterranean but the vast expanse of land throughout the rest of Europe. The Roman plow in fact was lightweight and was made to work light clayey soil. Instead the new nordic plow was tied to at least four oxen or even eight if the land was being worked for the first time. At this point, though, it wasn't only agriculture which progressed. During the Middle Ages, long lists were compiled of occupations held in disdain. In fact, the majority of occupations were on that list. Scornful weren't only dubious or ambiguous positions such as the innkeeper, the minstrel, the alchemist but even the most innocent occupations were blacklisted: the weaver, the pastry maker, the country warden, the tailor, the miller. It is true that the Church made a distinction between explicitly forbidden occupations, like prostitution and usury, and those considered simply "lowly," but overall, the documents and statutes from where these lists come reveal the contempt held for any kind of work outside the agricultural area. Profit-motivated occupations were condemned.

A change of climate came about after the year 1000 A.D. with the development of new occupations typical of a society in expansion. A strong wave of social mobility began and changed the picture of the workworld. There was no longer an undifferentiated mass of farmers and poor craftsmen below the landowners but a complex stratification of professions and interests which fed into the cities. It became the occupation which conferred social status; which formed a person's identity.

The new professions were seeking social recognition, a right of entry among the accepted occupations. Professional consciousness had been deeply religious. Now, however, Confraternities were founded for the various professions. Each had a patron saint and a coat of arms. Usually the saint would be pictured with the tools of trade in hand. The new professions were calling upon the Church to help open up social awareness and acceptance of these new forces emerging from the Middle Ages.

Particularly after the year 1000, new occupations emerged in the cities, characteristic of a society in expansion.

1) "Didache" 12, 5; 2) St. Jerome, "Letters," IV, 125; 3) St. Basil, "Long Rules," 42, 1-2; 4) St. Augustine, "The Work of Monks," 25, 33; 5) Jacques LeGoff, "Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 80-81; 6) St. Benedict, "The Rule," chapter 48; 7) Ibid.; 8) Ibid.; 9) St. Benedict, "The Rule," chapters 32, 35; 10) St. Gregory the Great, "Pastoral Care," II, 7.



FAMILY LIFE

Weakened family life is one of the greatest social ills of our time.
The "New Family" Movement has as its aim to bring the Focolare spirit of unity into family life, so that each family will be deeply united within itself and with other families.

THE CHALLENGE OF A SPECIAL MOMENT

PART II

We are continuing our series of interviews with members of the New Family Movement who share with us how they handled the challenge of dealing with their children as they approached adulthood.

(Names and places have been changed by the Editor.)

Compiled by PHYLLIS SCARINGE

George and Ruth have been participating in the gatherings of the New Family Movement for a number of years and shared with us what effect this has had in their family.

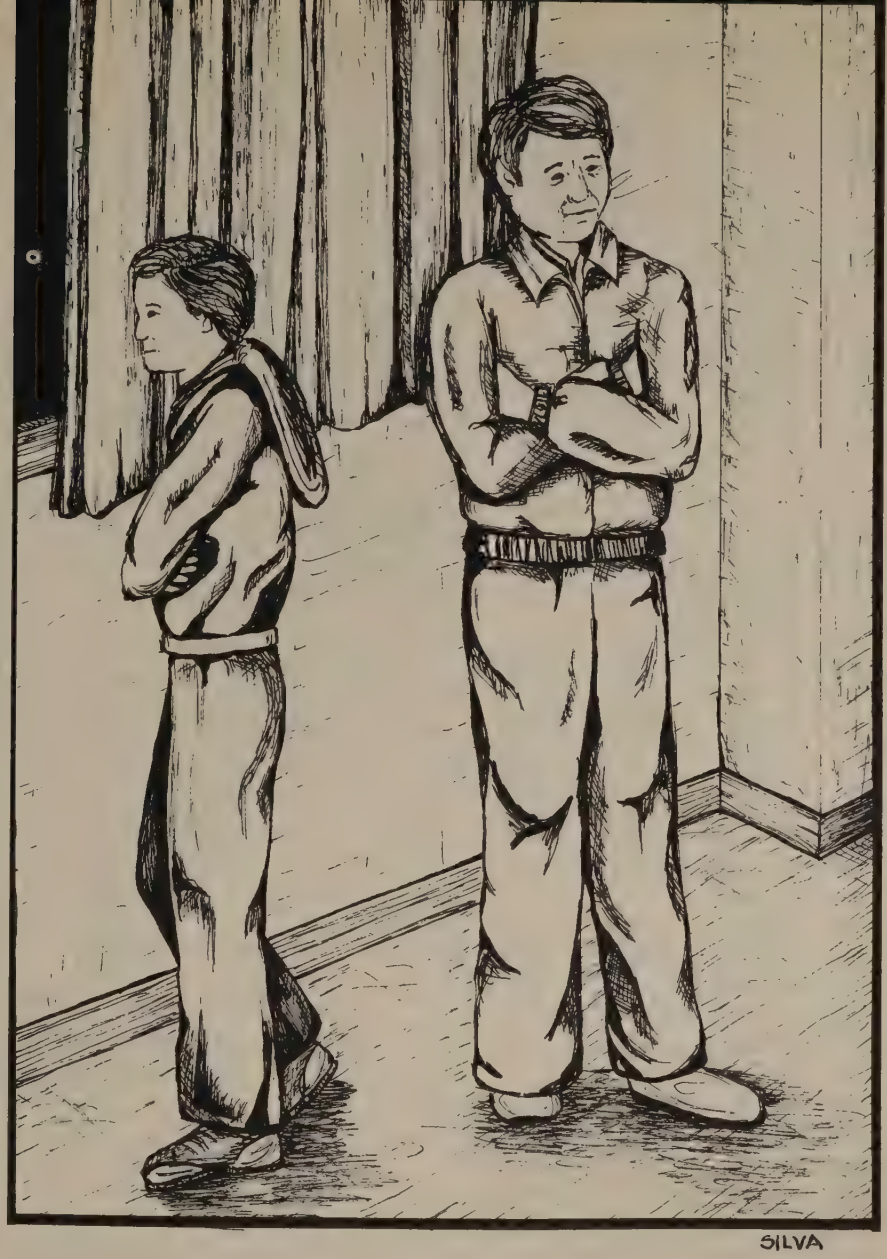
George: Actually, my wife was the first to become involved in the Focolare. My big concern was work and we were adding on to our house. I listened and watched from afar for a long time and I could see that *living* the Gospel was emphasized. I liked that, and I could see that something new was happening in my family.

Ruth: When I first came to know of the Focolare, I thought of my children right away and I said, "Oh, this is great. If my kids would just get into this!" I was so excited. That's when a friend from the Movement told me, "You live it first, then God will take care of your children...." It knew it was true. I did think though that at this rate it would take forever! But I just bit my tongue and started to do my best.

"It was very important that we met the Focolare when we did. Although our three children are very different from each other, they were all going through critical moments. For example, our daughter had gone away to college and she was questioning the values she had learned at home and was confused by the lifestyles of her friends."

George: It had always been my concern that our children meet their obligations. If they made a promise to be in at midnight and didn't honor it, I was set back to see that they were not able to fulfill their obligations to me as a parent and to themselves as persons. It was a matter of honor. I'm referring to even simple directives, like for example, if I would say to one of the boys, 'Don't forget to put oil in the car'.

"The idea of parenting came to me primarily from what I had picked up along the way. I didn't have a dad to guide me along, neither did Ruth, so I didn't really know what guidance to give. I knew that I was the authoritative figure of the family. I didn't even look for love from them, or for anything beyond the incident that was going on at any given time. If



"In the past I think I would have tried to use my authority to get him to change the situation."

they didn't put the oil in the car, I was upset by it. I was disappointed that they didn't honor my wishes and because not living up to their responsibilities led to a lack of honor and respect.

"We were church attenders, but I too had begun to look at the Church as an obligation to fulfill since that's the way I was brought into it. Vatican II had just ended so we were trying to understand all that *that* meant. The word 'love' was beginning to creep back into the vocabulary and I noted that the Focolare used it too. In, fact, the first idea I remember in connection with Focolare was that of mutual love, unity. Little by little, I understood that the idea fostered by the Church, also through the Movement, was this: whatever the situation, whatever the problems, we must love first, and then begin to work things out with this attitude. If we act first from the things to be done, trying to solve problems without love, we end up with limited solutions that don't stick.

"The trick though is that if we approach everyday life from the angle of love, we are going to have a lot more demanded of us! Even though I didn't jump into the Focolare all at one time I began to see that it was more than a Movement for husband and wife, and it wasn't just for young people. Rather it was a Movement for everyone, for the whole family—it *involved* the whole family. At the different gatherings we attended I saw the relationship between old and young, among Asians, Americans, Europeans, Africans. To me this meant everything—everything I had understood the Church to be. However, I had some re-focusing to do. Most of my adult life I had concentrated on the law and authority side of the Church and had tried to raise my family based on this; love had become something apart. Love at one end of the spectrum, and raising a family at the other: the two did not blend.

Little by little I began to change. I saw people trying to be the first to love, trying to love Jesus in each neighbor, to forgive, to live mutual love and I decided to try it too.

"When a situation would come up, I tried to see the predicament that my child had gotten him or herself into from *their* viewpoint. Before, if I had said the last word, well then, it was my last word. Instead, I began to try to see situations ►

in a loving way, in a fatherly way, leaving them options. I think I understood that there are many ways to arrive at a solution and now I am not afraid to take other routes to the answer.

I remember that one time I thought that out of love for my son I had to tell him that I no longer knew who his friends were and that this concerned me. In the past I think I would have tried to use my authority to get him to change the situation. Now I felt that I could take another approach so I shared my experience with him, what different kinds of friends had meant to me throughout my life, how their influence had effected me in good and bad ways. It was really a beautiful conversation. He listened very carefully to me and I think he felt loved because I saw the results very soon afterwards. Of course, my changing is an ongoing thing and I don't always succeed, but my attitude is very different now.

"What helped me very much in my relationship with my children was to come to grips with one part of my life that I had been neglecting all along. I just did not understand it. It was the mystery of Jesus on the cross. I had always thought that his suffering, and also that sense of being abandoned by the Father was part of the contract of mutual love that he had made with the Father: Jesus would live and teach and then die on the cross. It was part of redeeming us and I just did not attach that much significance to it. I went right to the resurrection, to the good part of it, and I didn't realize that the supreme sacrifice was *there*.

"What did this mean in my relationships in the family? You can do a lot of things for people. You can help, you can empathize, you can support. But to *die* for another is the hardest thing to do! And to do it with love on top of everything else was something I had really not thought too much about up to that point. Instead, the effort of loving made me see that I had to cross that threshold in order to become not only a believer, but a doer. Once I had said, 'Okay, I understand, now I am going to do it', I thought I had already taken the step, but that was only the beginning. The trials and tribulations had to come. And one came up very shortly after I had made this very important realization.

When I first came to know of the Focolare I immediately thought of my children and said, "Oh, this is great. If my kids would just get into this!" I was so excited. That's when a friend from the Movement told me, "You live it first, then God will take care of your children."

"One of my sons came up to me one day and told me that he wanted to give his life to God through the Focolare. That possibility had never occurred to me. I should have perceived it as the greatest thing that could happen but it took me a few days. All along I had been thinking about my son's education, all the things that follow graduation. However, I had not seen life through *his* eyes; I had not gotten into *his* shoes. I felt as though God were saying to me, 'Are you or are you not a follower of mine?'

Finally I told my son, 'I want to support you, to encourage you that you may have the courage and stamina it will take to do whatever God is asking of you.' I knew I had to give him my full unity, as though I were going through it with him.

Over the years this unity has helped me to let go of him and my plans for his future, to recognize that what is important is that God's will is being done."

Ruth: The relationship that I had with our children before my contact with the Movement was a very open one. At times, however, I simply remained silent even though I disagreed when they told me about some of their ideas or involvements because I wanted to keep the lines of communication open. I would tell myself, 'They have been living with me all these years, surely they know where I stand.'

"To love them meant also to see them 'new' day by day, forgiving and truly forgetting their past mistakes."

Little by little I began to see that it was often more love for them to say just what I was thinking. But to love them meant also to see them "new" day by day, forgiving and truly forgetting their past mistakes. This was particularly important in my relationship with my daughter. She sometimes got herself into some rather difficult situations. I was tempted to think, 'She's my daughter and she should know better.' Instead, I began to try and love her, recognizing the presence of Jesus in her. I discovered that this was a love that went beyond all natural or human limits.

"Since my daughter was away at school she would call when she had a test or a friend was in trouble, etc. I tried to listen to her with all my attention, trying to 'make myself one' with her. I began to realize that when she spoke of this 'friend' she was sometimes speaking of herself. Out of love for her I felt I could really share what I thought. The fear I had had of shutting off communication was gone. My manner was different, too. There was more love in place of the fear and impatience I had had before.

"For example, once we were in the car and she said, 'You know, Mom, this friend of mine is asking me why I have to go to Mass'. I found myself able to explain to her with love because I was no longer anxious. I wasn't fearful thinking, 'She has got to get this because if she doesn't under-

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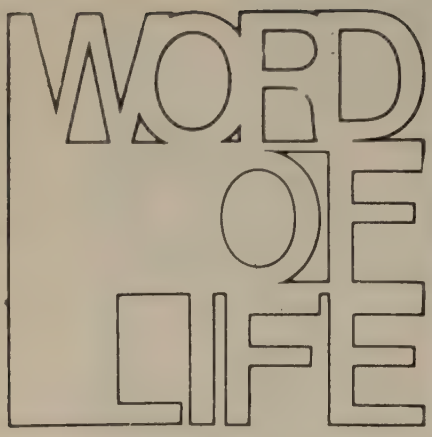

"But you are not
in the flesh,
you are in the spirit,
if in fact the Spirit
of God dwells in you."

(Romans 8:9)

These are words of great hope from Paul to all of us, particularly to those who live in the midst of the world. In this case flesh and spirit do not mean body and soul, the material and spiritual components of the human person, but instead denote contrasting functions, two radically different ways of living and behaving.

The word "flesh" here means individuals left to their own resources and deprived of grace, who therefore, are inevitably ruled by their passions and the inclination toward evil within them. For these reasons they are incapable of avoiding sin and pleasing God. On the other hand, the Spirit spoken of here is the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Risen Lord that we receive on the day of our baptism. The Spirit communicates to us the grace of Christ and enables us to live according to the new lifestyle that Jesus brought on earth.

"But you are not in the flesh, you are in the spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you."

In chapter 8 of Paul's letter to the Romans, where this word of life is taken from, the apostle describes the marvelous effects brought about in us by the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is in us there is no more room for fear and discouragement because our sinful drives and passions can no longer enslave us. The Spirit is much more powerful than all these inclinations. The Holy Spirit enables us to live as children of God, as new creatures, persons who are truly free, always more free from evil, always more free to love in the true sense of the word—on condition, naturally, that we know how to listen to His voice.

"But you are not in the flesh, you are in the spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you."

These words are intended to give us a new attitude as we face all the difficulties we meet in the course of our life as Christians.

The first obstacle we meet is the inclination toward evil which is within us. Often these inclinations present themselves as overpowering drives, natural needs and rights, or as determining forces, which seem to leave us powerless to act otherwise. Hence the weak or nonexistent resistance we offer at times to the demands of our passions in the moments of temptation. This also explains why many Christians yield to the mentality of the world, a mentality which justifies so much behavior that is contrary to the Gospel. We are dealing with what is called naturalism, the most insidious threat to the Christian life. This naturalism gives our instinctive drives a determining value, losing sight of the newness and power of the Gospel.

"But you are not in the flesh, you are in the spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you."

Another serious obstacle is presented by the atmosphere of sin in the world in which we live.

Appalling at times are the proportions evil takes on in our society. The spirit of the world seems to use all the means which progress and technology place at our disposal to create a collective mentality in total contrast to the Gospel. Then there is the opposition we are liable to meet each time we try to bear witness to Jesus at work both in the private and public sector.

This state of things can lead to a pervasive lack of confidence that weakens and paralyzes our Christian witness.

"But you are not in the flesh, you are in the spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you."

Then there is the third obstacle, and this is the most frequent. The obstacle

presented by our daily failures. Even after fervent resolve and in spite of so much light and grace, we continually find ourselves struggling with our weakness. Certain defects of ours persist, and, no matter how hard we try, they show no signs of disappearing. Now, this realization could be very disillusioning, very bitter, enough to plunge us into discouragement. Then there's the danger that we might withdraw into ourselves and settle down to a life stunted by mediocrity, when instead the Christian life asks us to go beyond ourselves, always involving renewed efforts towards generosity.

"But you are not in the flesh, you are in the spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you."

This word of life helps us to react against all these dangers. It leads us to a real confidence in the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. To believe in the Holy Spirit means to be convinced—like Saint Paul—that the Spirit is much stronger than all the inclinations towards evil we carry within us.

The Gospel is not a utopia. It can truly be lived in every situation of our life and make of it an anticipation of heaven. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is much more powerful than all the forces of evil put together. So we shouldn't be afraid of bearing witness to Jesus—with humility but always with firmness—even in our public life. We shouldn't be afraid of going against the trend of the world, or of standing up to the intimidation we face in our surroundings. We are certain that, in the end, victory will belong to Jesus.

Regarding the experience of our own weakness, this word of life can give us a surge of tremendous optimism.

Progress in the Christian life is not measured by immediate results that we can point to. Many times Jesus makes us wait for the results in order to dig a foundation of humility and in this way create in us the conditions for an ever purer love for him and for our neighbor.

What is important is never to give up.

To believe in the presence of the Holy Spirit within us means this too, then: to persevere with confidence renewing our good resolutions every day.

Certainly the Holy Spirit will win out here, too, bringing to fulfillment in us the work he has begun.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

I am a pediatric physician in a large county-run clinic. I was feeling particularly rushed and overworked one Monday afternoon and I was tempted to let the next patient pass on to another colleague.

When I read the patient's chart I was grateful I hadn't. It was a suspected pregnancy of a 14 year old girl. I examined the girl, confirmed the diagnosis and spoke to her and her family. I wanted them to know that I understood their anguish but after trying to truly share their concerns I could also share my belief that it was a life that was now involved and that we would do all we could to help her with this baby. They seemed calmed and reassured.

Since the family had some difficulty speaking English, a licensed vocational nurse helped translate. I later learned that she herself had had her first baby when she was 14 years old and the mother in this case reminded her of her own mother's reaction. The relationship of trust between us had developed over the past 3 years and our ability to reach out to this family now seemed to be a result of it.

Teen pregnancies are also required to be seen by the social workers. I was initially hesitant to make the referral because I was fearful that she might encourage abortion.

The following day when the family came again for an unscheduled conference with me, the nurse who translated shared with the family how she had been able to overcome many problems and raise her son (now 17). She shared this experience because we could tell that the father of my patient was having a hard time accepting this pregnancy. At the end of the conference, though, I felt that everything would go well.

Several days later, the social worker shared with me that she noticed the adolescent was depressed. She said that the girl had told the obstetric interviewer that she was thinking of aborting. The social worker said that in counselling patients she discusses with them the alternative to abortion and that she believed that abortion was the alternative of choice here, even though the gestation period was beyond what the law allowed for termination of pregnancy.

I tried to share with her with as much love as I could, my ideas about how much pressure this girl was under and that an adolescent, or any person who is depressed is not always in the best position to make responsible and quick decisions.

Many other staff members became directly or indirectly involved and it became increasingly difficult to maintain relationships beyond the differing opinions. The word of life, "You will be my witness not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria and indeed to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) kept reminding me that in order to be His witness I had to keep love alive in my heart for all my neighbors. Some days I went home not knowing what the outcome would be, what the family would choose to do.

In the meantime my small effort to be a witness brought a Hindu colleague to share about her own values and respect for life. A new relationship between us was born.

The licensed vocational nurse seemed to have found her own healing and was able to forgive her mother after all these years.

At the next visit the girl came with the news that she had decided not to have an abortion. I contacted a social work agency immediately. A real miracle seemed to be that they were able to obtain placement for the girl in a good home for pregnant teenagers where she would receive complete care, and continue her education among other things.

One of the biggest miracles was I think, that the word of life helped me to be firm but not to break unity with the staff who thought differently.

C.M.

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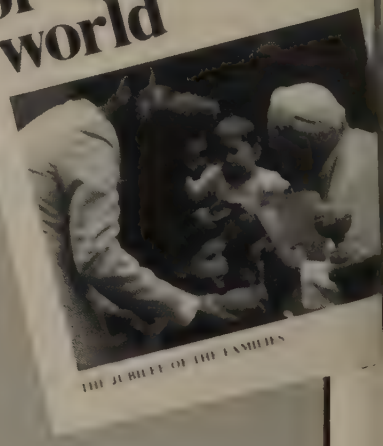

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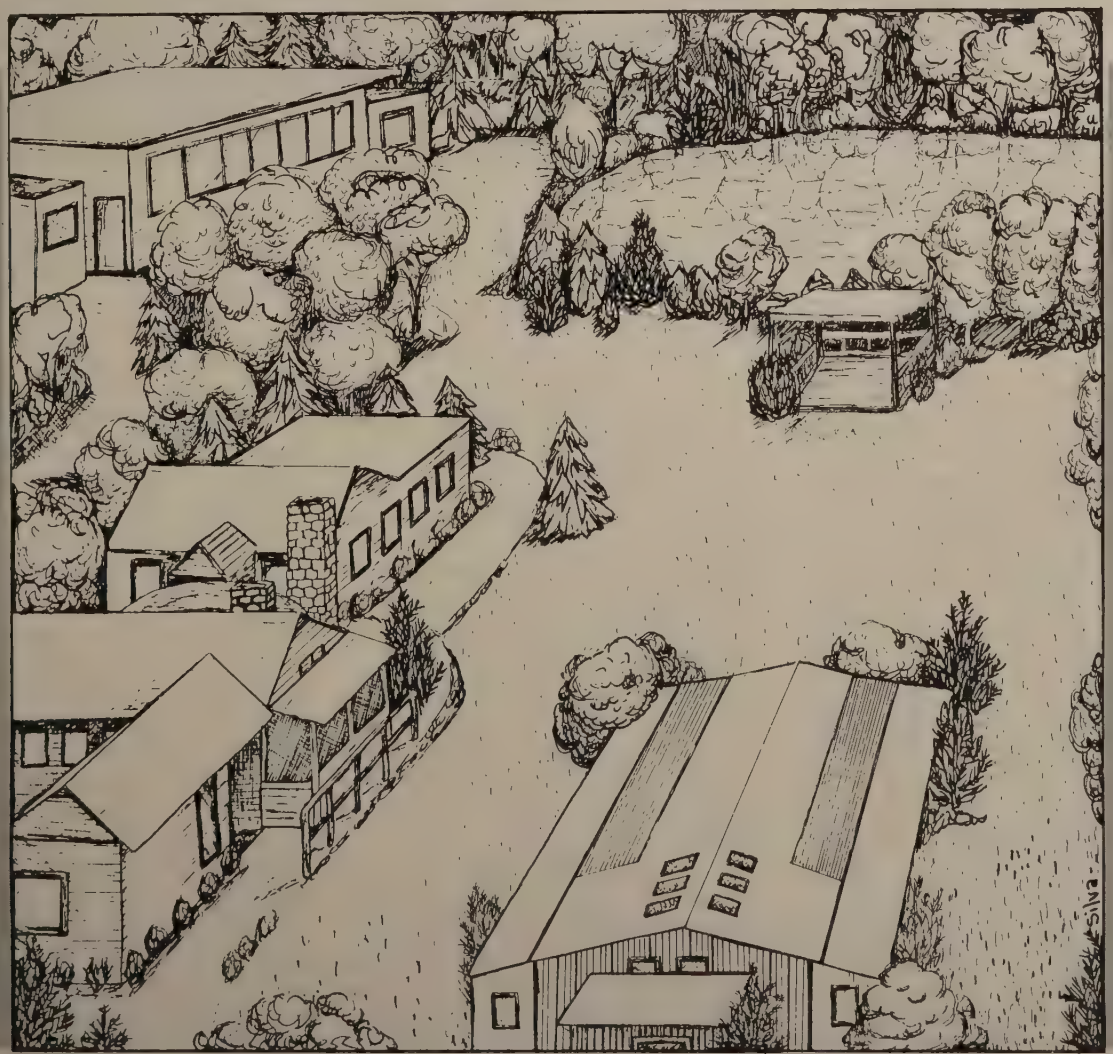


For further information contact the Focolare Center nearest you. (see inside back cover for addresses)

Building unity on the job

The following are experiences of life of members of the New Humanity Movement involved in various fields of human endeavor.

Economy and work

A new rapport

I am in the U.S. Air Force. Recently, I was promoted to the rank of sergeant which means I became a supervisor for several people. As supervisor, I am responsible for each person's well-being both on as well as off duty.

When I was first assigned this new responsibility, I evaluated it immediately in terms of the spirituality of unity. I decided the first thing I could do was work at building a stronger unity between my supervisors and myself. I talked openly with all of them to find out what they expected from me. Right away we established a new rapport which seemed to enable us to talk things out.

In turn, each was glad to give back his support. Most also gave valuable advice and encouraged me to ask for help whenever I needed it.

Then the test arrived. One of the individuals whom I supervise had been in the service only a couple of months. He had gotten into serious trouble and I learned that the commanders were seeking possible judicial action. I knew it was my responsibility to try to love in the midst of regulations, and therefore investigate the case, rather than just let the matter take its course.

First, I decided to get to know this individual better. I checked his records and saw that he had been doing excellent work on duty. We had several discussions in private and I learned that he was a good person who was, however, having some problems adjusting. It seemed clear that his mistake *was* an aberration, atypical of past behavior.

My responsibility, therefore, was to explain to the commanders this other side of the individual which I had seen.

To do this, though, took a lot of courage. All of my supervisors are older, more experienced and have much more rank than I have. I realized that I had to trust in God in order to have that forcefulness which would result in the commanders reviewing the case. Each time that I went in, it was an either or situation: Die to myself and work on this case, or let the situation continue on the path that was

standard procedure. I kept opting for what I thought would be building unity.

The final outcome was good. The commanders weighted heavily our judgment and lowered the punishment from possible loss of rank, wages and confinement to a letter of reprimand which can be taken away in the future with good conduct.

Later the Head Supervisor thanked me. He said, "The only reason it turned out the way it did was because you cared."

The "hundredfold" though came when he said that he too had learned a lesson. He saw a need to establish a new rapport with all the workers in order to increase unity in our area.

P.N.

Social ethics

Jury duty

My wife and I were very involved in planning a meeting we have been looking forward to for a long time. The week prior to this meeting, which was to be held in the place where I work, I was selected for jury duty.

Part of my responsibility for the meeting was to have keys to certain rooms and areas and be to be present to see that all the facilities were open and available.

I had never served as a juror before so this was a totally new experience for me. The case was a murder trial and it was a difficult case in that conflicting evidence and testimony were presented. The jurors were an interesting group of persons. We had never seen one another before but during the time we were together we got well acquainted. The group was very mixed in every way. We had men and women; Blacks, Hispanics, Anglos. We had many occupations represented—a teacher, a railroad engineer, an office manager, a minister's wife, a university professor and others. We ranged widely in age with the youngest being a young woman, a recent college graduate who had majored in criminal justice.

As the days went on we became somewhat more tense as the severity of the crime was evident—a man had been killed—but we had to decide if the alleged murderer was in fact the man who committed the crime or not, and if we found him guilty we had to come up with the sentence.

We occassionally had an informal vote to see if we had agreement. Because everything was not crystal clear, many of us saw things differently from time to time. When we had been together for a week, and many were becoming increasingly tense from being away from their jobs, and maybe losing pay or business, there was a heightened tenseness among the group.

I was preoccupied with our meeting when by Friday we were still not in agreement as a jury and the meeting was to begin the very next day. I left the house that morning giving my keys to my wife, saying, "I may not be with you for the meeting as the judge could sequester us for the weekend and not let us return to our homes if we don't reach a unanimous verdict."

One of the nice things about jury duty is that you are taken as a group each noon for lunch. Prior to going to lunch that Friday, our group was at a point where 11 of us were of one opinion about the verdict, but the young woman who had majored in criminal justice was of the opposite opinion. Some of the group of jurors, because of their tenseness and exhaustion with the whole experience, began to badger her and were somewhat less than kind. The more they tried to persuade her the more stubborn she became to where it seemed a battle of the wills. We were taken to a hotel restaurant that day by the baliff and by chance I found myself sitting next to this young lady. During the week she had told us of her father's birthday and how her family celebrated it and what gift she gave her father. I knew that my responsibility was to love this young woman in a Christian way, emptying myself of my concerns and preoccupations and concentrating on her—doing in my own way what Jesus did for us, that is, lay down my life, in this case my preoccupations and my will, to do the will of God for me. ►

I talked and listened to the young woman about her family, about her father and his birthday party, about the gift, which was a cordless telephone, about which I knew little, and we talked about how it worked and how much her father would enjoy that gift. We made no mention of the trial, of our fellow jurors.

As we were being driven back to the court and the jury room which by now seemed like a prison for us, the young woman said to the rest of the group, "We may have a unanimous decision soon." Once we were in the jury room by ourselves as a group of 12, she explained to the others that they had not treated her with respect, that they had badgered her and that they made her angry and resistant. On the contrary, she went on to say, "this man" (meaning me) has treated me kindly, has not tried to pressure me, and I feel free to state my position about this case.

Within a matter of a few hours the trial was over, I was on my way home and the next day was present for the beautiful gathering I was hoping to attend.

D.J.

Education

My classroom

My first year of teaching seemed like an obstacle course without end. Difficulties arose from a variety of factors. I was a "rookie": untried, unproven—naive. I began during the middle of the school year with classes already well underway; the new classes were composed of "discipline-poor students" (they were wild). To add interest, we had no textbook for this newly created "lower" level because the standard text was simply incomprehensible to them. The last reality clinching an unforgettable first year was I had no classroom. I had six. At each bell, I gathered my materials and exited into the hoards of screaming, jostling, excited youth on their way to their next classrooms. Approximately 152 days that year, six times a day, usually in the stairwells, I resolved never to teach again without a classroom, without books. My supervisor, in fact, fervently promised a room for the next year; meanwhile, I began compiling a body of material to use in the eventuality that I *should* pass on to a second year.

Suffice to say the year ended. I was numb, but nothing had obliterated my intense desire for a fixed point of reference, a place to leave my compendium of mimeographed stories, rules, exercises, my paperclips, coat, boots.

The last day of school my supervisor handed me a key. It went to a lovely room. Windows were broken, the intercom had been ripped out, tiles uprooted, but it was lovely; stationary, fixed. I lugged all my materials in, looked the room over swiftly, and left for, the summer.

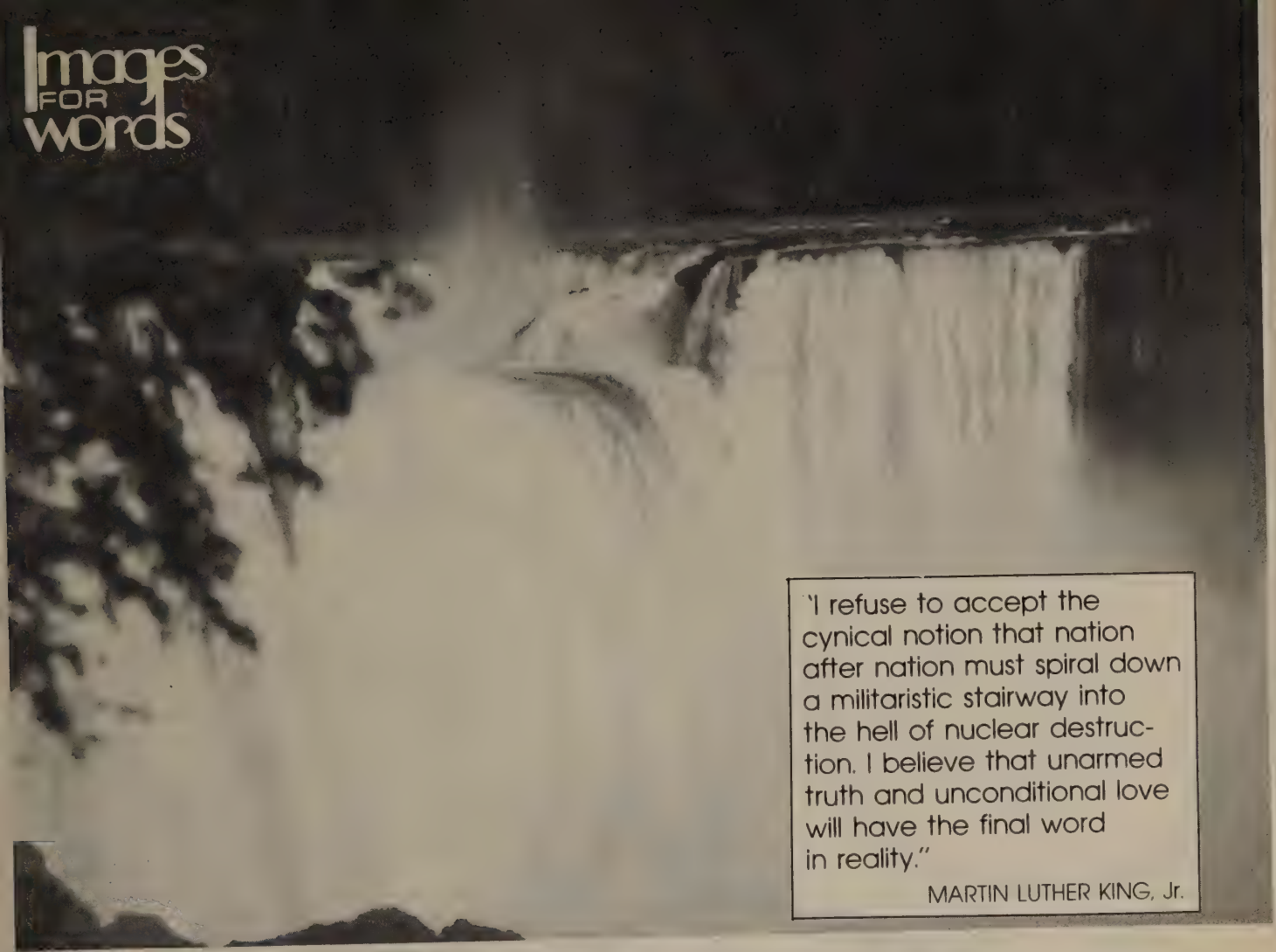
September 3, I re-appeared among the cheerful lot of teachers looking remarkably improved over the last time we had met.

My supervisor sidled over giving me a "welcome back" smile and said, "Ah, I have something to tell you." Since I am averse to slow deaths, I asked her to tell me quickly. She took a breath and shot back: "Your room has been given to a new teacher who has seniority in the district." I couldn't believe it. I *couldn't* believe it and, I did not take it very well. All the way down the hall, I rampaged around inside, thinking only of what the year would be like, imagining the upcoming physical and emotional drain that was the lot of roving teachers.

I turned the corner to where my classroom was situated. Sure enough, a tall, genial fellow teacher was ambling around in my room. It looked nice. Plants in the window, posters on the wall. Mainly it just looked stationary. My file cabinet was standing, ugly and green, outside in the corridor.

Slowly I began gathering materials again for six classrooms. Everyone skirted me as they went down the corridor to his or her respective room. My spirits were down around my knees and sinking rapidly as I kept telling myself, "Knock it off, Jane, this is a chance to love Jesus Forsaken." [1] But I kept scouring around, sorting, re-filing, cleaning with great dejection.

In one of the classrooms while cleaning out the closet, I found a pile of rolled posters. Since there was so much to do, normally I would not have bothered with anything extra,



"I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr.

United Nations

but this time, I just sat down and began unrolling each one to see if they could be used to decorate the rooms.

A few were useful and one, outstanding. It was of a Shakespearean play I particularly liked. It was beautiful. It evoked the drama of one man's choices, etc. However, it wasn't usable: I would not be teaching British Literature this year. I rolled it up for safekeeping, against the day, I thought grimly, when I *would* have my own classroom.

That's when it finally hit me. I knew coldly, clearly, with extreme lucidity, that this was not Gospel. Gospel was not to pout, not to remain angry, not to hoard. I might *never* have a classroom, I thought. I might never teach in the future. I might die tonight. I looked at the poster in my right hand and knew what I had instinctively been avoiding. The only one teaching that Shakespearean play was the tall fellow ambling around my classroom. I said out loud "No Jesus. I am *going* to love you." Before I could let myself analyze, I went over, knocked on the door. With a big smile, I introduced myself and wondered aloud if this poster might prove useful since he was teaching Shakespeare and I was not. He stood open-mouthed when he heard my last name. He said, " *You* want to give *me* that?" I explained that it made sense after all, because I wasn't teaching Shakespeare, etc. He just remained speechless so I said goodbye and went back to unpacking. I felt free again inside. Even though it would be a grimmer year, I was happy because, with this difficulty, I was with Jesus Forsaken. He had chosen me and I chose him back. I was happy.

The year began, bells rang, I "floated."

Somewhere early in Decem ber, the vice-principal called me into his office. He is big and tough and deals with discipline problems—student as well as teacher related. I was a bit nervous opening his door. Excitedly he jumped up and said, "We found a room!" "We got a room for you." I was stunned. "We'll just send Detention Hall to the cafeteria and the room is yours. All day!" I was so happy. Say what you will, that room became a personal gift from God and this time, I felt right, legitimate, in loving it.

M.A.

1) Refers to Jesus in the moment when, on the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?".

One day at school some boys were calling me names. This made me mad. But I thought, "Well, if Jesus were here now he wouldn't start calling them names back." So I went off and started playing with my friends. Soon those other boys came over and started playing with me and my friends.

Eddie (9 years)

One day we were planning to go to the movies and my sister wanted to see a movie that I didn't like . To have unity with her I went to watch her movie.

Anthony (9 years)

When I was in the hospital I had a lot of blood tests. So I offered up all the suffering for Jesus.

One day, when I was playing with a toy, my brother came in and wanted to use it. At first I said no, but then I realized that I should love him, so I let him use it.

Joseph (10 years)

One day my parents went out to go shopping and asked me to take care of my little sister. I didn't want to because I wanted to play with my friends, but then I remembered that Jesus was in my sister and so I took care of her.

Anthony (9 years)

There is a boy at school that nobody likes and everybody always makes fun of. He goes around at lunch hour asking for cookies and nobody ever gives him any, so I gave him half of mine to do an act of love.

Joe (10 years)

The young and the Gospel

My cousin came from out of town to work with my dad and so he stayed with us. One night my parents were going out so my cousin was babysitting my two little brothers and me. It was the first time he had ever babysat so he was real careful. He wouldn't let us move around the house or go to our rooms to play. We have an old coffee table in the living room that it's o.k. for us to sit on when we watch T.V. but he didn't want us to sit on it. Now if this wasn't bad enough he told me to go into the kitchen and wash the dishes because I "never do anything for my mother". And that was not true!.

I went into the kitchen really mad at him, but while I was washing the dishes I remembered that there was Jesus in my cousin. As I put the last dish in the sink I remembered that Jesus loved all the way to the end, so I put the dishes away and really cleaned up the kitchen. My cousin never knew that I was trying to love Jesus in him, but when I was done I was really happy inside.

Holly (10 years)

The big football game between Judson and Madison was on Saturday. Saturday afternoon my Dad asked us if we wanted to go. You can imagine how excited we all were.

We went to the store to get tickets but they were sold out. We thought we could try and get them at the gate so we drove to the stadium. Traffic was moving slowly and my dad tried one short cut after another to get us there a little faster. While we were driving I thought of the word of life that said that nothing was impossible to God. I knew that if He wanted it we would make it to get tickets. This helped me not to lose my patience and to love everyone in the car. We made it to the ticket box, and what a surprise. Seats in the front row on the fifty yard line —the best in the house.

Holly (10 years)

FREEDOM THE MAGIC WORD

Question: Freedom is the magic word for us young people. Usually, however, it is interpreted to mean the possibility of doing whatever we want, whatever we feel like doing. What does freedom mean to you?

A group of Gen

Answer: It's true that freedom is often interpreted by young people to mean the possibility of doing whatever they want, but this attitude hides a need that is deeply imbedded in each person. We were created free and we reach self fulfillment when we reach our full freedom, that is when we decide upon our actions, not because of external imposition, but by our own free choice. In other words, when we can exercise the power of deciding our own destiny.

Therefore, young people, even adolescents and children, instinctively react to every form of authority that attempts to force their will, and they try whenever and however they can to exercise their self-determination because of this vital need to affirm their own existence. The conquest of our freedom is an arduous task; the road is strewn with difficulties and right from the very beginning we run up against an old adversary: our ego. Around us a thousand persuasive masks work at conditioning our brain until we become like robots. We become convinced that in order to be free we have to wear certain clothes, we have to eat certain food, we have to, we have to, we have to.... At this point people, do what they feel like doing, but where is the freedom we were born with?

When people realize that they were deceived, then they begin to break the chains of slavery and they discover that through silencing their ego their concern and love for others grows. They begin to love and, even though they could remain indifferent to others because nothing is forcing them to do otherwise, they freely give of their time and energy to others. They could relax and enjoy their possessions and instead they freely offer what is extra to them to those in need. They could take it easy at home and instead they freely open the door to those without family or friends food or lodging.

The subtle, delicate and persistent joy that runs through their days is the proof that they are enjoying the taste of being free. When they turn to God they understand that freedom means struggle: " ... he made them free ... he could have saved them all with just a glance. But he had to leave to them, who were made in the image of God, the joy of freely conquering their freedom."[1]

Eletta Fornaro

1) Chiara Lubich, "Yes Yes, No, No," page 70, New City Press, London, 1977.

MARIAPOLIS 1986

SOUTHWEST:
Las Cruces State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico
June 29, after supper -
July 5, after breakfast

MIDWEST/EAST COAST: Alfred University
Alfred, New York
July 20, including supper
July 25, after breakfast

CANADA (West): Northwestern University
Nelson, B.C.
July 13, after supper -
July 19, after breakfast

CANADA (East): Carlton University
French/English Ottawa, Ont.
July 27, after supper -
August 2, after breakfast

The Mariapolis are the summer meetings of the Focolare, held every year, for those who wish to come into contact with it.

For one week the Mariapolis offers to hundreds of people of all ages and walks of life a very full program that includes general sessions with talks on the spirituality of unity, sharing of experiences in living this spirituality, documentaries, meetings in small sharing groups and recreational programs. The Mariapolis is a time for prayer and recollection. The celebration of the Eucharist is at the center of each day and all participants gather together at the conclusion of the activities for evening prayer.

Children have separate activities which involve them in the life of the Mariapolis through various spiritual and recreational programs. Special programs are available for teenagers as well.

The week, however, is more than the sum of its parts. It is an experience of how life, also every day life, can be transformed if love and unity are at its foundation. When the Mariapolis ends, people find that it was not only a tremendously enjoyable week, but they have experienced a way of living that they will be able to bring back home.

VACATION MARIAPOLIS

Mariapolis Luminosa
Hyde Park, New York

July 27 including supper
August 10, after lunch

Space is very limited.
If you are interested in attending
please contact the Focolare Center
nearest you.
(See inside back cover for addresses)

"What is it with your father and mother? They're so different."

(Continued from page 15)
stand it she may never go to Mass again.' In place of all that apprehension was a peace that came from the freedom of being able to love. I have experienced that in this disposition it's much easier to find the correct words to use.

"You can see the results, too. I remember one occasion that our daughter returned to school with one of her friends after a visit home. Later she called to say that her friend had asked her, 'What is it with your father and mother. They're so different. And your brothers, too." Then our daughter began coming home more often.

George: One of the most beautiful aspects of this life has been to see the providential love of God reaching us over and over again in unexpected ways. I feel I have a new way of seeing life. It is no longer money or houses or beauty which matter to me, but the idea of a world focused on God.

You know, those times when I have seen the children get together, they have so much joy. It is not just pleasantries they share together, it is this same view of life. What else can a parent want for their children?

I remember there was a time when we were all in the same house yet miles apart. Now we are in different places but our lives have one central focus. I cannot think of anything that divides us other than distance.

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT —SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

FOCOLARE ADDRESSES IN NORTH AMERICA

CHICAGO:
P.O. Box 53426
Chicago, IL 60653

SAN ANTONIO:
P.O. Box 32302
San Antonio. TX 78216

NEW YORK:
P.O. Box 496
New York, NY 10021

BOSTON:
P.O. Box 239
Roslindale, MA 02131

WASHINGTON, DC:
P.O. Box 4958
Washington, DC 20008

LOS ANGELES
P.O. Box 71701
Los Angeles, CA 90071

TORONTO:
P.O. Box 302 — Stn.T
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6B 4A3

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